

WHOLE HEALTH NEWSLETTER

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
North Florida / South Georgia Veterans Health System

Fall 2021 Vol. 2, edition 1

Live Whole Health

For all Beings

by Zinju Earthlyn

May all beings be cared for and loved,
Be listened to, understood and
acknowledged despite different views,

Be accepted for who they are
in this moment,

Be afforded patience,

Be allowed to live without fear of
having their lives taken away
or their bodies violated.

May all beings,
Be well in its broadest sense,

Be fed,

Be clothed,

Be treated as if their life is precious,

Be held in the eyes of
each other as family.

May all beings, Be appreciated,
Feel welcomed anywhere on the planet,

Be freed from acts of hatred and desperation
including war, poverty, slavery, and street crimes,
Live on the planet, housed and protected
from harm,

Be given what is needed to live fully, without
scarcity, Enjoy life, living
without fear of one another,

Be able to speak freely in a voice and
mind of undeniable love.

May all beings,
Receive and share the gifts of life,
Be given time to rest, be still, and experience
silence. May all beings, Be awake.



Message from the Whole Health Program Manager *Laurie Reisman, LCSW*

Greetings to all with much respect. I can hardly believe that we are going through another surge of COVID cases as the variant moves throughout the world. Recently, after losing three close people in his life, my son said, "I've learned not to hold on to any grudges because you never know when it will be the last time that you see someone; things change so quickly." Though, I wholeheartedly agree with him, this is not the ideal way that I would have liked for my son to learn such a profound life lesson. I know many people (myself included) who spend a lot of time and money on retreats and workshops; engaging in all sorts of personal growth to gain this knowledge. Yet if one lives long enough, it seems that experiences will eventually bring many to that realization. This time and day; with all the political and social unrest, coupled with the pandemic, seem to have brought many of us to this conclusion. Buddhist Monk and teacher

Thich Nhat Hanh says, "It's not impermanence that makes us suffer. What makes us suffer, is wanting things to be permanent when they're not." The uncertainty of life is the only thing that we can truly count on. Looking at the world from this perspective helps me to prioritize what is important to me. When I find myself perseverating about things that I have no control over or holding grudges because I had an expectation of someone that didn't meet me in the way that I felt it should, I sit back and ask myself, if that is where I want my energy to be spent. Like money in the bank, we get to choose where our energy goes and what kind of legacy we want to leave in this world. What is important to me and what Matters to me are relationships and cultivating loving kindness in the world. That is what matters to me more than being right or proving a point. What Matters To YOU? Whole Health Coaches are available through all your primary care physicians to assist you to create goals and a meaningful life centered on what is important

(continued from page 1)

to you. Please reach out and take advantage of the wonderful Whole Health Services that we have to offer. We are here to serve and together we can create a world full of love, compassion, and kindness.

[Whole Health - North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System \(va.gov\)](http://WholeHealth-NorthFloridaSouthGeorgiaVeteransHealthSystem.va.gov)



***“ One thing I ask of the Infinite, One thing I seek, To dwell in the Infinite presence
all the days of my life, to awaken to the beauty of each moment
as I pass through this world.”***

Psalm 27:4

Voice of a Veteran: Taking Charge of My Health and Life

*Chahn Chess, Lieutenant Retired Navy (Environmental Health Officer).
Submitted by Eugene Baughns, Certified Peer Support Specialist*



I want to share some things that I really enjoyed about our Taking Charge of My Health and Life men's group. This men's group has been such a great thing to be a part of. I say that as someone receiving support and from the standpoint of being a part of a group to give back to someone. I think that they both matters, especially for us as Military VETS. This group has touched on our Past and our Future:

Past: This group really helps us to be able to come and get support the way that we need, without negative criticism for reaching out, and supports us being able to open and get poured into. We need it as well.

Future: It also allows/facilitates us to re-engage/strengthen what is already inside that motivates us – the commitment to service and helping to protect or make our fellow man better. That never left even though we got damaged/hurt somewhere along the way of enacting that commitment.

These two things are both so very important and have been very important to me.

A long time ago I decided that I was not going to rely on drug-based/centered therapy as my foundation for “getting better”. I realized that (for me) having consistent interaction with people that could help as well as other “hurt” people that were also committed to the same thing was going to be best for me. I think I am not alone with that belief and I have seen so many like me that are slowly mending as we continue to engage in groups like this as well as participate in a robust Whole Health (Holistic oriented) program in an ongoing way. I am even at a place where I can see a new light and am looking at how I can give back to my fellow Veterans and even do something with the VA to support my Veteran Family.

I went through some major things, more than some and a lot less than others. But I want to make my pain and my ongoing growth count for me and for someone else. That is one of the major rewards of being a part of groups like the one that Eugene Baughns has organized. They have great promise for tapping into what was buried by pain. You never know whose life you might save or who may get motivated to step back up and into life for themselves or to save someone else. Thank you for taking the time to give back and putting an effort into helping to heal some pain, plant seeds, and equip some people to move to the next stage of what their BEST can be if they choose to take the steps forward.

Chahn Chess, Lieutenant Retired Navy (Environmental Health Officer). Submitted by Eugene Baughns, Certified Peer Support Specialist

If you'd like to participate in the Taking Charge of My Life and Health class referred to in this article, please contact your assigned Whole Health Coach located in your Primary Care areas. This is to ensure that the referral is appropriate, and Veterans are invested in the Whole Health Approach to Recovery. The group is a Males Only Support Group with only 8 slots available through 9-week rotations on Wednesdays, 11:00 - 12:30p.m. The next group starts on September 1, 2021.

Peer-facilitators are a key component of the Whole Health approach. Many Veterans engage with trained peer facilitators as they learn about the benefits of Whole Health & Personal Health Planning. Watch this video to learn more: #LiveWholeHealth <https://youtu.be/OLLSCVvGitU>

"If you can sit quietly after difficult news, if in financial downturns you remain perfectly calm, if you can see your neighbors travel to fantastic places without a twinge of jealousy, if you can happily eat whatever is put on your plate, and fall asleep after a day of running around without a drink or a pill,... if you can always find contentment just where you are, you are probably a dog."

Jack Kornfield



The Gainesville Sun:

Opinion: 'COVID crazy' sneaks up on you, but there is help

(August, 4, 2021 Judy Oliverio, Gainesville, FL)

Have you been depressed, fatigued, irritable, unmotivated, anxious, or feeling angry about COVID? If you said yes to one, you are not alone. We were never ready for the depths of this unrelenting virus. We weren't ready for COVID to destroy every external and internal system or our mental health.

I must admit as a RN, Veteran, coach, and a person with my own chronic mental health issues, I did not stay sane. I went COVID crazy. (I don't mind admitting it.)

The hospital protocols were insane. I started mental health COVID cold calls. There were emergencies, suicidal thoughts, 911 calls made to save confused oxygen-deprived victims. It was mental health mayhem.

And then it happened. I lost a fellow soldier, a brother, a hero, my patient to suicide. My chronic depression spiraled from guilt, sadness, and compassion fatigue. My daily routine consisted of work, dog, insomnia, cry, go back to work. And repeat.

I needed help. I hadn't had a psychiatrist in 15 years. I was stable on low-dose meds. I didn't know how far down the rabbit hole I would go. I didn't know the conversations we had would rewind in my head and his last call stating he felt great would put me under.

I prayed. I prayed the thoughts would stop. I had bladder pain for weeks and I felt lethargic. I headed to the ER after work.

The doctor entered the room in full personal protective equipment. I could barely see her brown eyes.

Chovid Crazy Continued

"Did you run a marathon lately?"

"Only at work."

"Your lactic acid is 5.4."

"You need 3 liters. Is there anything that happened weeks ago when these symptoms started?"

I hesitated. My head went down. "Well, I lost my patient to suicide."

And the tears rolled down my flushed face and stopped at the mask and rolled down the sides of my cheeks. I couldn't stop them. Maybe I was not enough that day.

"Judy never be embarrassed to say what is the truth. I figure your mental state is now affecting your physical state." she said kindly.

"I didn't really realize that I wasn't even drinking water. I have been medicating myself with loads of coffee, Diet Coke, and sugar. I have not been doing my daily depression discipline. My daily routine of exercising three times a week, a 45-minute meditative walk with no phone, guided meditation, one call to a best friend, reading a positive book before bed and writing was replaced by Netflix streams."

"Judy, rest this weekend and come back anytime you need help."

Her words landed in my heart. That doctor that helped me was assisting COVID patients heading to intensive care unit to be intubated. She was my VA earth angel. No judgment, just kindness.

The next day I lined four waters on my kitchen counters, called a psychiatrist and walked four miles. I meditated under my favorite tree.

I prayed the visuals of my patients' suicide would subside. I prayed for the world, the protection of others and vaccinations to go fast. I prayed I would find myself, the proud self that can handle any patient.

I started the list with baby steps. There are no light switches in mental health. It is a daily step forward with an occasional back pedal.

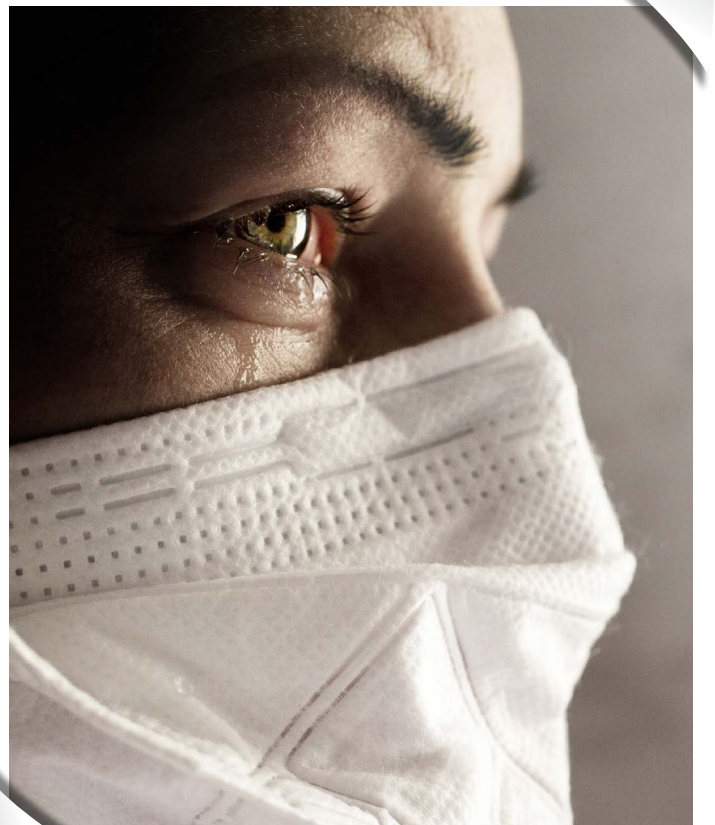
My list: exercise; outdoor activity; meditation; prayer; funny movies; read positive books; repeat a childhood hobby; dance; walk your pet; volunteer; call a friend; be light on yourself and flexible; garden; deep breathing; yoga; beach time; learn something new; tell your primary care physician, a counselor or psychiatrist; if suicidal, please call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at **1-800-273-8255, 24 hours a day**; keep hopeful.

COVID crazy sneaks up on you. There is help. I realized I may have lost a soldier but have saved many more heroes. You are a hero. Be brave.

Even though we are 6 feet apart, this pandemic has made us expose our most intimate human emotions. Those with a mental health diagnosis are trying to remain stable. People with a new diagnosis, need just as much help.

Join the COVID crazy club, all welcome here! We are all in this together! Try one thing from the list and tell me if it helped.

Judy Oliverio, RN, USAF VETERAN, Primary Care Mental Health Integration Case Manager



WE SERVE ALL WHO SERVED

Many Veterans who identify as LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) have served our country honorably. The acronym LGBT represents diverse groups of sexual and gender minorities. Sexual orientation describes who we are attracted to physically and/or emotionally. Gender identity refers to a deeply felt inner sense of being male or female, that may not align with our biological sex.

While VHA never has had any anti-LGBT policies, discrimination experienced in the military often prevents Veterans from seeking VHA care or may deter them from sharing important information about themselves and their health with providers. Studies show that members of minority populations often suffer from chronic stress due to higher levels of discrimination and prejudice. This stress can negatively impact LGBT Veterans' mental and physical health, and lead to higher rates of depression, anxiety, suicidal thoughts and attempts, substance abuse, domestic violence, hypertension, heart disease, and cancer.

The VA values diversity and inclusion and is committed to providing respectful and equitable care in a welcoming environment free of discrimination or harassment of any kind. North Florida/South Georgia VHS offers several services to LGBT Veterans, including sexual health screenings, fertility services, affirming therapy and support groups. Transgender veterans are eligible to receive hormone therapy, speech therapy, and specialized Prosthetic items.

If you would like to learn more or have a concern related to your healthcare as an LGBT Veteran, please reach out to one of our LGBT Veteran Care Coordinators: Johanna (Joey) Conner, LCSW (352-376-1611 ext. 105452) or Dr. Michelle Smith (352-376-1611 ext. 105760.)

NATIONAL WHOLE HEALTH RESOURCES!

The Whole Health approach to care empowers, equips, and treats Veterans so they can take charge of their health and well-being and live their lives to the fullest.

- Download the [Live Whole Health app](#) to manage your Whole Health journey anytime, anyplace.
- Live Whole Health App Video: <https://youtu.be/Z00m-6bC31U>
- The [Whole Health](#) website is a great place to start your Whole Health journey.

North Florida/South Georgia Whole Health Resources!

[Whole Health - North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System \(va.gov\)](#)

Veterans Health System Employee Whole Health Resources!

<http://vaww.northflorida.va.gov/NORTHFLORIDA/employees/index.asp>

Visit [Whole Health resources for employees](#) to make time for your own self-care.

<https://dvagov.sharepoint.com/sites/northflorida/dir/pao/emergency/SitePages/COVID19.aspx>

Resources for Homeless Veterans

- Information on homelessness programs and initiatives through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
- The National Coalition for Homeless Veterans. Has a helpline available to support Veterans needing homelessness resources and support. Contact at 1-800-VET-HELP or 1-800-838-4357.
- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Homeless Veterans Aid Line. Contact at 1-877-4AI-DVET or 1-877-424-3838.

WHOLE HEALTH

Circle of Health

"It was only from an inner calm that man was able to discover and shape calm surroundings."

Stephen Gardiner



[Randy Knowles, Community Partner, WSI. PGB](#)

I can only imagine a shift from a health care system focused primarily on treating disease to one guided by a personalized health plan that considers the physical, mental, emotional, spiritual and environmental needs of every human being.

I can only imagine the learnings the veteran administration will achieve in the years to come, as it relates to its 'Whole Health Care System'. What is clear to me is the direction, be it early, of the VA's development and practice.

In today's world, none of us escape challenges that affect our wellbeing. What does Whole Health mean to us as individuals? The feeling of completion is an important part of inner happiness; and when we learn to live life from the state of wholeness, we begin to enjoy everything with ease, grace and delight. Feeling complete begins with our own journey.

The VA's Whole Health Coaching Model is on the right track to enlighten individuals with steps to consider, practices to put in place and a caring staff assisting veterans. The real work begins when we, as individuals, decide to do this for ourselves. Then we are better equipped to encourage others to follow suit and create individual Whole Health Lifestyles.

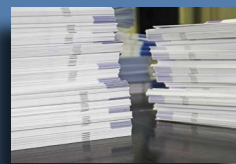
I can only imagine global recognition of a Health Care System that embraces the VA's Whole Health Care approach! As challenging as this may seem, my wish is we strive to embrace it, not only spiritually, but as a functional part of our daily lives.

Reference:

[Surroundings - Whole Health Library \(va.gov\)](#)

Wendy Skinner, Peer Support, at the Gainesville Primary Care clinic.

Whole Health-Surroundings Handouts:



[Whole Health: Surroundings \(brightcove.net\)](#)

[Assessing Your Surroundings](#)

[Toxins and Your Health](#)

[Toxins and Environmental Inflammation](#)

[Eating to Reduce Inflammation](#)

[Improve Your Health by Removing Toxins from Your Body](#)

[Ergonomics: Positioning Your Body for Whole Health](#)

[Create a Gratitude Practice](#)

[Laughter Heals](#)

[Forgiveness](#)

[Workaholism](#)

[Too Much Bad News: How to do an Information Fast](#)

[The Healing Power of Hope and Optimism](#)

MEDITATION



The CIH modality this month is meditation. Meditation is often misunderstood. Many of us who were around in the 60's think of meditation as people sitting around in a circle with their legs crossed humming. However, meditation can mean many things.

Meditation has been around for centuries. According to the Center for Mind and Body Medicine, "meditation creates a relaxed state of moment to moment awareness which is critical to self-awareness and stress reduction".

There are three types of meditation: concentrative, mindfulness and expressive. Concentrative meditation focuses on an object, image, or sound. Repetitive prayers are a concentrative meditation. Mindfulness meditation is being in a relaxed state and aware of our thoughts, feelings, and sensations as they arise. Mindfulness does not focus on a particular object. It can be used by people of all faiths as well as people who are agnostics and atheists.

Mindful walking is one way to practice mindfulness and consists of slowly walking, using all your senses, (listening, looking, smelling, thinking, feeling, etc.), noticing how your body feels and observing all that is around you. Mindful eating is another way to practice mindfulness. Thinking about everything you eat, noticing it's texture, taste, thinking about where it started from and steps it went through before it arrived at your plate. Expressive meditation is comprised of active techniques such as chanting, dancing, shaking, rapid breathing, etc.

All the types of meditation are beneficial. Scientific studies have been done to prove that they have benefits. Studies demonstrate meditation can lower blood pressure, decrease pain, decrease frequency and intensity of asthma attacks, improve your mood, and decrease anxiety.

If you are interested in knowing more about meditation and learning how to practice it, you can contact one of the Whole Health coaches at your primary clinic. The Whole Health coaches are trained in Mind and Body medicine and have Mind and Body skills groups various days and times during the week. They are a series of 10 classes that teach meditations such as mindfulness, shaking and moving, biofeedback and autogenic, drawing, journaling, genograms, guided imagery along with other meditations.

Source: The Center for Mind-Body Medicine, 5225 Connecticut Ave NW, Suite 414, Washington DC 20015. Cmbm.org

By Deborah Lefler, Whole Health Coach and LPN,

COVID Coach

Submitted by Lisa Huang, Supervisory Librarian NF/SG VHS

COVID Coach is a free, easy-to-use mobile application created for everyone, including Veterans and Servicemembers, to support self-care and overall mental health during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. It was developed by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) in 2020. The app connects you to resources to help you cope with stress, stay healthy, stay connected, and navigate parenting, caregiving, and working at home while social distancing or sheltering in place. COVID Coach is not meant to replace professional care related to COVID-19 or mental health conditions.

Short video about COVID Coach: <https://youtu.be/b932LremOlc>

COVID Coach is available in English and Spanish; the app is available for free download at the Apple App Store or the Google Play store.



MINT

Article Written by Pat Granberry

Whole Health Coach and LPN Lake City VA Medical Center

Mint is the name for over a dozen plant species, including peppermint and spearmint, that belong to the genus *Mentha*. These plants are particularly known for the cooling sensation they impart. They can be added to foods in both fresh and dried forms; therefore, mint is a popular ingredient in several foods and beverages, ranging from teas and alcoholic drinks to sauces, salads, and desserts.



Although mint is easy to add to many dishes, research demonstrating its health benefits has mainly used mint taken in capsules, applied to the skin, or inhaled via aromatherapy. Mint's health benefits range from improving brain function and digestive symptoms to relieving breastfeeding pain, cold symptoms, and even bad breath.

Breath mints and chewing gum can mask foul smells for a couple hours but aren't an optimal long-term solution for bad breath.

- Eating fresh or dried leaves: Used to treat bad breath.
- Inhaling essential oils: May improve brain function and cold symptoms.
- Applying it to the skin: Used to reduce nipple pain from breastfeeding.
- Taking capsules with food: May help treat IBS and indigestion.

<https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/mint>

“Remember that good nutrition is not about focusing on any one food or nutrient above all others. It is about balance: consuming a variety of foods and getting a balance of all kinds of different nutrients. For personalized nutrition counseling, reach out to your PACT dietitian.”

By Melanya Souza, Registered Dietitian, NF/SG VA Healthy Teaching Kitchen Dietitian and VA National Healthy Teaching Kitchen Co-Lead, Gainesville VA Medical Center



Grace Under Pressure

By Robin E. O'Hearn, Ph.D.

Psychologist/Health Behavior Coordinator, Jacksonville Outpatient Clinic

Initially this article was going to focus on healthy eating during the holidays. In our pre-COVID era, we typically expected hectic, busy schedules filled with family feasts, office potlucks, and Secret Santa exchanges replete with seasonal treats. Given that we are not yet past this pandemic that has added a whole new element of stress to the season, this article – like pretty much everything else over the past 18 months or so – is shifting and adapting in response to the realities we are facing as we begin to enter a new holiday season. May this issue of our newsletter find you all healthy, safe, and connected to those

you love. It is our intention to broaden and strengthen your connection with a larger community... your fellow Veterans, your Whole Health team, and your VA health care team.

It may feel strange going into the holidays with so much disruption to our usual ways of doing the holidays. When you ask people what they value most about the holiday season, some of the most frequent answers will be connecting with family and friends, celebrating and deepening faith traditions, and celebrating those things with special meals, gifts, and rituals. Our ability to engage in these beloved traditions faces new challenges, and this makes it that much more important that we find ways to uphold our traditions as a source of comfort and hope.

How to connect. For many of us, travel is not on the table this year. Even if it is, the size of the holiday gatherings may be quite smaller than typical. Creativity (and technology) can help us to stay present in the lives of those we love. You've probably already been using virtual connections such as Veterans' Video Connect for your appointments or Zoom for work meetings. Consider starting a new tradition to share... perhaps starting a family holiday scrapbook that can be mailed from person to person to add in messages, pictures, recipes, and memories of holidays past. Keep it going and choose a day when you and your loved ones can get on a video call to share a toast and talk about your contributions.

How to celebrate what matters. One of the foundations of Whole Health is the MAP: Mission, Aspiration, and Purpose. This is a way of thinking about how we connect with our deepest values. For many, attending religious services that are usually packed with worshippers does not seem like a safe option this year. What are other ways you feel connected with your faith? For some, a sunset walk on the beach can be a time to reflect on the glories of our world and inspire reverence and renewal of faith. If the warmth of family gathering is a central value, think about ways to maintain that warmth in perhaps a smaller, more intimate manner than a 30-person meal. If you're able to do so, giving to a cause that is meaningful to you (homeless veterans? Foster kids?) can be a way of connecting to your core values.

Nurture what's important. Love. Faith. Family. Nature. Whatever it is, how can you honor it? It may be planting a tree, donating a meal to a first-responder neighbor, knitting a blanket for donation to a nursing home, or fostering a shelter animal. Your imagination is your only limit!

Be compassionate. Yes, to others. But first to yourself. Be patient, take time to pause and appreciate your efforts. Give yourself breaks to breathe, stretch, take a walk, enjoy a hot cup of tea or coffee. Make or order in a healthy and delicious meal. Listen to music that recharges you and lifts you up.

For more opportunities to connect and nurture yourself, reach out to your Whole Health team. We have ongoing virtual supports and would love to welcome you!



“Tough times never last but tough people do”

Dr. Robert Schuller

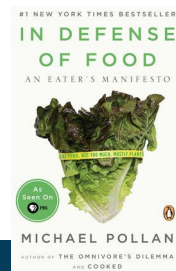
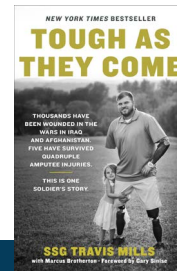
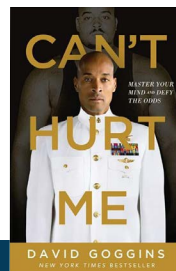
“As the weather gets harsher and tougher, it's time to brace yourself! The difficult times are simply temporary, but it's due to those tough and difficult times that you are stronger today. The best part is that you are now tougher today than you were yesterday! And more importantly you, got through it all.”

Celebrate your strength!!!!

Pat Granberry Whole Health Coach and LPN Gainesville VA Medical Center

Fall into a Good Book

Submitted by Lisa Huang, Supervisory Librarian NF/SGVHS



The NF/SGVHS Library collaborates with Whole Health Coaches to offer virtual book clubs for enrolled NFSGVHS Veterans. Veterans receive the book(s) for free and get to engage in discussion with their peers. All book discussions are conducted using VA Video Connect, the VA's modality for secure communications.

Fall book club options:

"Can't Hurt Me: Master your mind and defy the odds" by David Goggins

"Tough as They Come" by SSG Travis Mills

"In Defense of Food" by Michael Pollan

If you are interested in joining a future book club, please contact Lisa Huang, Supervisory Librarian, at Lisa.Huang@va.gov or 352-548-6312.

Acorn Squash

Submitted by Melanya Souza, Registered Dietitian, NF/SG VA Healthy Teaching Kitchen Dietitian and VA National Healthy Teaching Kitchen Co-Lead, Gainesville VA Medical Center

Prep: 10 min, Cook: 30 min, Total: 40 min., Yield: 2 Servings. Serving Size: 1/2 squash

Ingredients

1 acorn squash
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 teaspoon maple extract
1 tablespoon brown sugar
¼ teaspoon salt
Dash of ground black pepper



Directions

1. Preheat oven to 425°F.
2. Slice the acorn squash in half lengthwise and scoop out the seeds.
3. Lay the squash flat side down and slice into half-moon shaped pieces.
4. In a large bowl, whisk the olive oil and vanilla extract. Place the sliced squash in a mixing bowl and toss to coat.
5. Sprinkle squash with brown sugar, salt and black pepper and toss to combine. Spread acorn squash on a baking sheet in a single layer.
6. Roast for 30 minutes or until tender, flipping the squash after 15 minutes. Remove and discard the skin and serve warm.



Recipe notes:

Substitute any winter squash for the acorn squash if desired.

Nutrition Facts Per Serving: Calories: 170 | Total Fat: 7g | Saturated Fat: 1g
Sodium: 300 mg | Total Carbohydrate: 27 g | Dietary Fiber: 3 g | Protein: 2g

Submitted by: Melanya Souza, RD, LD/N

For more recipes, please visit www.nutrition.va.gov

Nutrition facts per serving:

170 calories, 7g fat, 1g saturated fat, 300 mg sodium, 27g carbohydrates, 2g protein, 3g fiber,
Submitted by Melanya Souza, RD, LD/N, Healthy Teaching Kitchen Dietitian

Healthy Teaching Kitchen Program for Veterans



The NF/SG VA offers many different interactive, nutrition education classes under the Healthy Teaching Kitchen program that focus on teaching Veterans how to apply nutrition education to reach their health goals through cooking and food preparation. All classes are currently offered online through VVC and cover everything from food selection, shopping, and meal planning, to home cooking, culinary techniques, food safety, flavor balancing, nutrient content and more. If interested please contact Melanya Souza, RD, LD/N our Healthy Teaching Kitchen Dietitian on Secure messaging or at 352-559-5961 or 352-548-6000 x 106630 to learn more and receive a current copy of the Healthy Teaching Kitchen class schedule.

Employee Wellness Healthy Teaching Kitchen “Bites” Series

For more nutrition tidbits and recipes, tune in for our upcoming Employee HTK Bites Series on Sept. 22nd, Sept. 29th, and Oct. 6th at 12:00pm (noon) EST on Microsoft Teams. For more information contact the Healthy Teaching Kitchen Dietitian, Melanya Souza, RD, LD/N

Take a Break!



Work Health Balance

David R. Hankins, M.Div. PSA, Chaplain Service

Do you know that even God took a day off (Genesis 2:2)? The Book of Genesis in the Bible tells us that God finished His work, then he rested. It's a good idea for us, too, no matter whether we believe in God! If He needed a day off, we might need two. That's what we get as VA employees.

We also get 15-minute breaks in the morning and the afternoon, plus 30 minutes for lunch, but how many of us take them? Once we get going, it's hard to stop. Besides, the Chief said he needed this by 2:00 o'clock, and my performance appraisal is coming up. And I feel fine. I'll take a break tomorrow.

When's the last time you said something like this? Probably this morning.

Supervisors step up to the plate and insist your staff take their breaks. Better yet, do it yourself. When they see you taking a break, they'll do it themselves.

Check out <https://www.va.gov/WHOLEHEALTH/professional-resources/EWH-resources.asp> for National Employee Whole Health Resources. Look through it and treat yourself. We'll all be more productive, and happier to boot.

Take a break. That's an order!



Navigating the Holidays: Healthy Food Swaps

Join the NF/SGVHS Library's upcoming lecture, "Navigating the Holidays: Healthy Food Swaps" with Healthy Teaching Kitchen's Melanya Souza on healthy eating ideas during the holiday season. This online lecture is free to anyone. No registration required. Should you have any questions, please contact GAILIB@va.gov or 352-548-6316.

Date: November 17, 2021 (Wed)

Time: 12:00pm EST-1:00pm EST

Join this WebEx online cooking demo at <https://tinyurl.com/epyem2ps> North Florida / South Georgia Veterans Health System

or join by phone: 1-404-397-1596, access code: 1993953873#





Contributors to the Veterans Newsletter:

- Laurie Reisman, LCSW North Florida South Georgia Whole Health Program Manager, message from WH Program Manager, From All Beings poem, Psalm 27, Jack Kornfield quote, National Whole Health Resources, Homeless Resources
- Lisa Huang, Supervisory Librarian NF/SG VHS: COVID Coach, Fall into a Good Book Navigating the Holidays; Healthy Food Swaps
- Eugene Baughns, Certified Peer Support Specialist, Voice of a Veteran for Taking Charge of My Life and Health
- Judy Oliverio, RN PCMHI, Gainesville Sun Opinion, COVID Crazy
- Joey Connor, LCSW LGBT Veteran Care Coordinator, We Serve All Who Served
- Randy Knowles, Community Partner
- Wendy Skinner, Peer Support Specialist, Surroundings,
- Debby Lefler, LPN WH Coach, The Villages CIH Modality: Meditation
- Pat Granberry, LPN WH Coach, Gainesville Mint, Dr. Robert Schuller Quote
- Robin O'Hearn, PHD Psychologist/Health Behavior Coordinator, Jacksonville, Grace Under Pressure
- Melanya Souza, Registered Dietician, NF/SG VA Healthy Teaching Kitchen Dietician and VA National Healthy Teaching Kitchen Co Lead, Gainesville VA Medical Center: Acorn Squash Recipe, Healthy Teaching Kitchen Recipe
- Chaplain David R. Hankins, M.Div. PSA Chaplain Service: Work Life Balance
- Heather Stiles, USN, HMC (Ret) Credentialing Program Assistant (VetPro) : editor and compiler
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